DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 277 770 UD 025 223

AUTHOR Bailey, Billie; And Others
TITLE Chapter I: Impacting Excellence in Basic Skills since 1965. Initiative to Improve the Quality of Chapter I Projects.
INSTITUTION Mercer County Schools, Princeton, W. Va.
PUB DATE 6 Feb 86
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Computer Assisted Instruction; Economically Disadvantaged; Educationally Disadvantaged; Individual Instruction; *Language Arts; *Parent Participation; Parent School Relationship; Parent Student Relationship; Primary Education; Reading Centers; *Reading Skills; Reading Writing Relationship; Remedial Programs; Rural Schools; *Supplementary Education; Writing Laboratories; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS West Virginia (Mercer County)

ABSTRACT

The overall goal of the sections of Mercer County's Chapter 1 project described in this profile was to provide a low-risk environment for the development of writing, reading, and related language arts skills in first, second, and third grade children. This goal was implemented within the broader sphere of the total school community. Communication, coordination, and involvement within that setting were inherent in the project's success. The project followed a pull-out design wherein students received 45 minutes of daily instruction five times per week. Two unique features in the design were as follow: (1) an underlying belief that the development of reading and writing skills are related, and (2) a parent communication involvement program, called HOME WORKS, designed to meet the specific needs of Chapter 1 children. The program had a significant impact on the writing and reading abilities of children in all grades. "Ripple effects" from the program resulted in more student writing in all grades throughout the school. While both the experimental and control programs were successful, the former, using computers, had a greater impact, resulting in the implementation of primary reading laboratories in the control schools. (LHW)

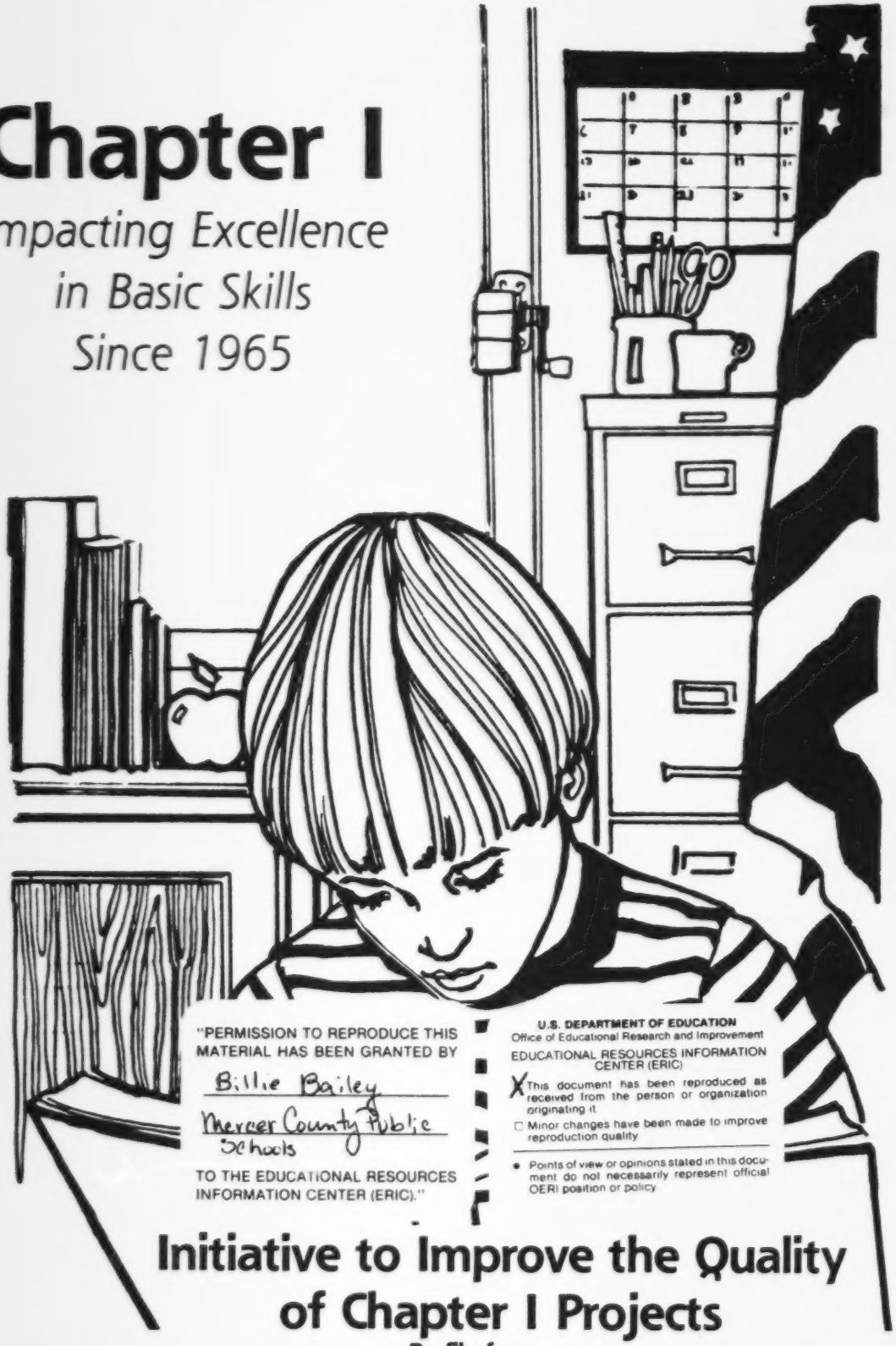
****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

11-13-86

ED277770

Chapter I

Impacting Excellence in Basic Skills Since 1965



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Billie Bailey
Mercer County Public Schools

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Initiative to Improve the Quality of Chapter I Projects

Profile for

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Princeton, West Virginia

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SUCCESSFUL COMPENSATORY EDUCATION IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

COVER SHEET

Local superintendent's or chief operating officer's name (Mrs., Miss, Ms., Mr., Dr.)

Mr. William H. Baker

Education agency's name Mercer County Public Schools

Address 1420 Honaker Avenue
Princeton, WV 24740

Telephone number (304) 487-1551 Congressional district(s) 5th

I have reviewed the information contained on this form and, to the best of my knowledge, it is accurate.

William H. Baker
Superintendent's signature

Date 2/6/86

****

School principal or Chapter 1 coordinator's name as appropriate, (or other official responsible for program administration) (Mrs., Miss, Ms., Mr., Dr.)

Mrs. Billie J. Bailey

Address 1420 Honaker Avenue
Princeton, WV 24740

Telephone number (304) 487-1551

Date of most recent State educational agency on-site review of project (for Chapter 1 submission) November 27-28, 1984

I have reviewed the information contained on this form and, to the best of my knowledge, it is accurate.

Billie J. Bailey
Appropriate district official or Chapter 1 coordinator's signature

Date February 6, 1986

State West Virginia

Chief State School Officer's Name (Mrs., Miss, Ms., Mr., Dr.)

Dr. Tom McNeel

Address State Department of Education
Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

Telephone Number ( )

I hereby nominate this project for consideration under the Chapter 1 Project Identification Program. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this form is accurate, and the project is being implemented in compliance with Federal requirements.

Date

Chief State School Officer's Signature

****

Name and Title of Person(s) completing form

Mrs. Billie J. Bailey, Coordinator of Federal Programs
Mrs. Pamela K. Bailey, Parent/PR Coordinator, Federal Programs
Mrs. Ruth B. Boyd, Supervisor of Federal Programs

Ia. DISTRICT INFORMATION

(Complete if project operates in a local school district, unless project is a State administered migrant program. State agency programs should be described on the next page.)

A. District Name Mercer County Public Schools

Name of Contact Person Mrs. Billie J. Bailey

Telephone Number (304) 487-1551, ext. 128

B. Descriptive Information for the 1984-85 school year.

1. Total district enrollment 14,286

2. Total number of classroom teachers 836

3. Grades or equivalent education span of district K-12

4. What is the racial/ethnic composition of the student body in your district/agency?

Less than 1 %	American Indian or Native Alaskan
" %	Asian or Pacific Islander
" %	Hispanic
12 %	Black, not of Hispanic Origin
88 %	White, not of Hispanic Origin

5. Total population in school district 73,942

6. In general, how would you classify the district?

Rural _____ Small town X

Suburban _____ Urban _____

7. What percentage of the students in your district comes from low-income families? 44.7 (Please indicate how you determined this number.)

The total county student population was divided by the number of that population on free or reduced lunch.

8. Please describe briefly any significant changes that have occurred in these student figures during the last 3-5 years.

The percentage of students from low income families has increased sharply in the past two years while the total district enrollment has steadily declined. Mercer County has an unemployment rate of 10.8% according to the Employment Security Department information for November, 1985.

Ib. STATE AGENCY PROGRAM INFORMATION
(Complete if project is operated by a State agency.)

A. Agency Name _____

Name of Contact Person _____

Telephone number ( ) _____

B. Type of Agency

State Educational Agency _____
State Institution/Delinquent _____
State Institution/Neglected _____
State Institution/Handicapped _____
Other (Specify) _____

C. Descriptive Information for the 1984-85 School Year

1. Number of institutions participating in State agency program _____

2. Number of institutions participating in the nominated program _____

3. Total number of classroom teachers _____

4. Grades or equivalent span of participating institution(s) _____

5. What is the racial/ethnic composition of the student body in the institution(s)?

_____% American Indian or Native Alaskan
_____% Asian or Pacific Islander
_____% Hispanic
_____% Black, not of Hispanic Origin
_____% White, not of Hispanic Origin

Ic. PROJECT INFORMATION
(Everyone must complete this section.)

A. Project Title:

B. Program Category

Basic Grants to LEA X
Migrant Education _____ Section 141 _____
Section 143 _____
Neglected/Delinquent _____
Handicapped _____

C. Area(s) of Service Submitted

Reading X
Mathematics _____
Oral Language _____
Other Language Arts X
Other (Specify) Parental Involvement

D. Number of children participating from public school(s) 120
and nonpublic school(s) 0 .

E. Grade level(s) or equivalent span of children receiving project services 1-3

F. Number of staff in the Chapter 1 project. teachers 2
aides 2
volunteers as needed

Describe the average educational (level) background, e.g., degree, experience, training of the teachers and education aides in the Chapter 1 project.

The two teachers involved in this project have elementary certification, grades 1-8, plus 18 additional hours in reading. Their average experience is 12 years. The two aides have 18+ college hours and an average of 14 years of experience.

G. School year(s) for which this project is being nominated (must include school year 1984-85). 1984-85

H. Estimated Chapter 1 annual per pupil cost to conduct this project in school year 1984-85. $690.97

I. What are the primary educational needs of the particular group of students served by your Chapter 1 project? Please indicate how these needs were determined and whether there are ongoing procedures for reviewing their relevance.

Chapter I children in the primary grades have limited language processing experiences. Test results (MAT, CTBS) showed weaknesses in the areas of letter recognition, auditory and visual discrimination, phoneme/grapheme relationships, vocabulary and comprehension.

Mastery tests, writing samples and observations are ongoing procedures that are built into the instructional program in order to check the relevance of determined needs.

J. **Describe how students are selected for the Chapter 1 project.**

1. Referral of the classroom teacher for testing by Chapter I personnel
2. Scoring at or below the 40th percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT), Reading or Language Section

The selection of eligible students for participation in the program is based upon the degree of individual student need as evidenced by the Metropolitan Achievement Test results, with priority given to those students displaying the greatest need, starting with the lowest percentile scored.

K. **List the names of the schools or institutions participating in the Chapter 1 project, and if it is an LEA project, the percentage of children from low-income families for each school during school year 1984-85.**

(Use additional sheet if necessary.)

Name	% of children from low-income families
Ramsey Elementary	86.0%
Montcalm Elementary	69.9%

* These two schools were test sites for a pilot program based on the approach that primary children effectively learn to read through writing. The above schools were chosen because they best represented the county's diverse demography and because the facilities could easily accommodate the program.

The decision to pilot such a program was based on the finding that a preventive remediation program in the primary grades was needed in order to address the large numbers of students served by curative remediation in the upper grades.

II.

1. CLEAR PROJECTS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

a. The overall goal of the sections of Mercer County's Chapter I project described in this profile was to provide a low-risk environment for the development of writing, reading and related language arts skills in children who demonstrated such needs. This goal was effectively implemented within the broader sphere of the total school community. Therefore, communication, coordination and involvement within that setting were inherent in the project's success.

The following objectives were developed to meet the project's overall goal:

(1) Children would learn to write anything they could say (encoding).

(2) Children would learn to read anything they could write (decoding).

(3) Children would develop their abilities to express and effectively use the language.

(4) Children's success rates would improve and, therefore, their self-concept would be enhanced.

(5) Children's successes would be recognized.

(6) Internal and external communication would be ongoing in order to

(a) provide cohesiveness within the program.

(b) serve as a link between the program and the community.

(7) Opportunities for professional training and development would be encouraged and recognized.

Since effective communication was part of the overall goal of the project, the entire school/community setting was involved in the communication plan. Project goals, objectives and other necessary information were disseminated through:

(1) Staff meetings, inservice training, faculty meetings.

(2) Presentation of the project information to PTA's, PTO's, advisory councils/committees and other civic/community organizations.

(3) Classroom discussion.

(4) Newspaper articles; radio and television releases.

(5) Brochures, newsletters and other printed information.

(6) Presentation of project information at professional meetings at local, regional, state and national levels.

b. Both formal and informal procedures were used to assure that the project's objectives were attained and reinforced. Informal procedures included program visitation and observation along with on-going dialogue with those involved in and affected by the provided services. Procedures such as testing, surveying and monitoring provided a formal instrument for making sure objectives were attained and reinforced.

2. COORDINATION WITH THE REGULAR SCHOOL PROGRAM/OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS

a. The Chapter I instructional goals incorporated the teaching of skills that are taught in any writing, reading, and language arts program; in addition, a computer-based instructional system was used to develop writing, reading and language arts skills.

Students began by learning the 42 phonemes. This knowledge allowed them to write anything they could say using a consistent phonemic spelling. Writing, then, developed skills that led students to reading.

A coordination of skills taught through this approach and through learner outcomes already established for Mercer County's reading and language arts curriculum, was developed specifically for the Chapter I approach. The comparison showed that the majority of the skills taught in the curriculum were also taught in the Chapter I program. The Chapter I curriculum, therefore, enhanced children's basic skills learning since it supplemented the regular program in all areas of writing, reading and language arts.

b. The computer-assisted instructional program was sequential and structured. Phonemes were introduced at the computer and were also presented in the regular reading program. This allowed for the regular classroom teacher and the Chapter I teacher to introduce and work on the same phonemes at the same time. The regular classroom teacher and the Chapter I teacher determined the learning activities that best supplemented the regular curriculum.

The format of the program included four days of computer assisted instruction and one day for other reading and language arts activities independent of the structured Chapter I program. This flexible day allowed time for supplementation of regular classroom activities and for coordination of materials and activities for the parental involvement plan developed in conjunction with the instructional program.

Communication for coordination between the Chapter I teacher and the regular classroom teacher was done formally and informally. Formally, both the classroom teacher and the Chapter I teacher completed a weekly Log of Communication stating the needed areas of reinforcement and the plan of action for that reinforcement. Informally, the teachers communicated verbally and through brief notes. The Chapter I teacher made lesson plans in conjunction with the regular classroom teacher's plans.

c. Chapter I administrators, supervisors, and principals checked regularly to see that the classroom teacher and Chapter I teacher were coordinating learning activities which were appropriate for reinforcing the regular program. Chapter I often initiated projects which involved the whole school, therefore, including all special programs (i.e. book fairs, reading incentive programs, newspaper in education projects, etc.).

The project assured that students served by special programs, such as handicapped, behavior disorders, etc., could also receive Chapter I services as long as the Chapter I staff was involved in the placement process, the additional services were deemed to be beneficial to the student, and the student met the criteria for eligibility.

3. PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

a. The following chart explains the methods used for parent/community involvement in the planning, implementation, evaluation and support of the Chapter 1 project:

Design	Methods	Parents	Non-Parent Community
Planning	Conducted informal dialogue on educational needs and priorities	X	X
	Conducted informal survey of individual community needs	X	X
	Encouraged program observation through bus tour of Chapter I schools	X	X
	Conducted formal random survey: "Parent Involvement in Planning Chapter I Project" (spring)	X	
Implementation/Support	Encouraged active participation at school Chapter I meetings so that student and program progress could be followed	X	
	Provided workshops and programs that helped supplement the objectives of the Chapter I program at home	X	
	Encouraged and trained volunteers for both instructional and non-instructional activities	X	X
	Provided speakers for various parent and community groups	X	X
	Encouraged parent/teacher conferences and other communication	X	
Evaluation	Conducted informal dialogue at parent/community meetings	X	X
	Conducted formal survey	X	

* b.

HOME WORKS is an involvement program for parents who are typically non-participants in the actual instructional program of their children. The program was designed during the summer of 1984 by a group of interested Chapter I teachers, supervisors and parents.

The original intent of the summer workshop was to set priorities for the improvement of the Chapter I project. The group identified their priorities for the general educational improvement as (1) improved discipline (2) emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills and (3) meaningful parental involvement in the instructional process.

Further discussion of the three priorities led to the conclusion that since instruction in basic skills was inherent in the Chapter I project and since the district had just begun a county-wide concentration on assertive discipline, the focus should be on improved parent communication and involvement.

Naming the program HOME WORKS evolved from national, state and local attention on increasing and/or emphasizing homework. Parents agreed that homework and parent involvement were synonymous even if not always compatible. By uncompounding the word homework, the meaning of the program, HOME WORKS, was compounded. A logo that brought home and school together in an appealing "primary" format and the slogan, "When HOME WORKS, School Works," provided the framework for involvement ideas.

The program was designed for parents who wanted to help their children build a strong BASIC educational foundation. Program components offered down-to-earth communication techniques and tools that parents could use to help their child at home. The philosophy behind the development of

the materials for the HOME WORKS program was that learning should be enjoyable, not dreaded, whether it occurs in the classroom or the family room. It was felt that parents and children working together on practice and reinforcement of important skills being taught should provide needed maintenance and should result in pleasant and meaningful HOME WORKS time.

The HOME WORKS program included:

* A HOME WORKS folder, personalized with the student's name, which was sent home periodically. The folder held such materials as:

  -A calendar of events and activities for the coming month.

  -A progress report in the form of a personal note from the child's teacher written in a space designated "PROGRESS" at the bottom of the monthly calendar.

  -Examples of the child's work and any special projects he/she may have completed.

  -"Do-able" worksheets that parent and child could work on together to help reinforce what was being taught in the classroom.

  -A special HOME WORKS magnet which was included in the folder the first time it was sent home. Since the refrigerator seems to be the communication center of the home, parents were encouraged to use the magnet to hold a special sampling of the child's school/home work.

  -Selected brochures or printed materials that were intended to help parents help their children. In addition to "how to's" on helping children in basic skills, parents also received hints for developing and using effective parenting skills.

* A HOME WORKS Library especially selected to provide parent/child interaction. The child had the opportunity to check out and take home these high interest books. Each book had a HOME WORKS Library Card in the card jacket of the inside cover. Parents signed the card indicating that the parent and child had read together.

* A monthly HOME WORKS parent newsletter which helped keep parents informed and involved. This centrally produced newsletter contained a blank column which each teacher could "personalize" with samples of student work, a picture or a special message, before duplicating and sending home.

* Positive communication by telephone, SMILE-GRAMS, special certificates of merit/recognition, and interaction at school-held parent meetings.

* A parent volunteer program. The purpose of this program was to get parents involved in the instructional program. Once parents were made aware that a need for their services existed and that training was provided to make them competent helpers, they were eager to participate.

These developed materials provided a catalyst for program expansion that was as varied and creative as each individual teacher. Teachers were encouraged to share their ideas during inservice sessions and through an internal staff newsletter, ON TARGET.

The HOME WORKS program was evaluated as part of the end-of-year evaluation, using a random sample survey of parents, principals, teachers/aides, and regular classroom teachers. The single-most responded to

reason parents gave as contributing to understanding of Chapter I was HOME WORKS materials (followed by personal meetings or communication and school-level meetings). Principals, Chapter I teachers/aides, and regular classroom teachers rated the effectiveness of HOME WORKS an average of "4" on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (satisfactory).

The increase in the number of parents who responded to the 1984-85 evaluation survey was significant. A 45% rate of return was extremely positive, given the number of surveys that never reached home and the past history of parent apathy in responding (1980-81 - 22%; 1982-83 - 27%).

Not only were more surveys returned, but also more questions were answered and the quality of the answers indicated that parents were better informed about and more involved in the Chapter I program.

Typical survey comments included such unsolicited statements as:

> "Previously my child would not read at home. This year he's read 37 books from the HOME WORKS library. His reading and spelling grades have really improved."
>
> "[My child] has gained knowledge, self-confidence and he cares about people. Thanks for the super job and the great communication."
>
> "I believe [my child] has benefited from the HOME WORKS program. It has helped me to know how to help him."

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

a. The Chapter I staff participated in the regular county preschool inservice training program. In addition, training sessions were developed to keep the instructional staff informed on new ideas, information and teaching techniques being used in writing, reading, language arts, parent involvement, and computer usage. A special three day training session was conducted in the fall of 1984 prior to implementing the computer assisted primary program. This session was attended not only by the Chapter I teachers and aides involved in the project but also by the principals, regular classroom teachers and central office administration. The project's philosophy, instructional techniques and integration with the regular program were presented at this session. An on-going follow up of the project's effectiveness was made possible through monthly staff meetings. Also, prior to expanding the project into seven additional schools in 1985, those teachers and aides who would be using the program for the first time received "on the job training" at the schools where the program was piloted.

b. Chapter I teachers and aides were encouraged to attend and present at workshops and meetings in their respective areas. Chapter I teachers attended and presented at the Regional State Chapter I Teachers' Conference in Beckley and Chapter I teachers and aides attended the WV State Reading Conference at the Greenbrier. At the Regional Teachers' Conference at Pipestem in October, 1985, two teachers presented separate sessions on the computer assisted reading project and on the HOME WORKS program. Teachers and aides were also encouraged to take college classes to enhance and gain knowledge in the areas of writing, reading, language arts, computer usage, and working with disadvantaged children.

5. STRONG LEADERSHIP

a. Chapter I building principals continually promoted Chapter I to regular classroom teachers and parents. Principals arranged time for regular classroom teachers and Chapter I teachers to meet for discussing learning activities, student progress, etc., for the purpose of coordinating the programs. The principals worked closely with the Chapter I staff in preparing the school schedule to maximize the number of students who could receive Chapter I services. Principals also had Chapter I programs presented at PTA/PTO meetings, counseled parents who questioned their children being in Chapter I, and encouraged regular classroom teachers to let Chapter I students share their lab written stories with their classmates.

A strong professional association between the principals and the project director was necessary in order to smoothly implement the change in instructional approach due to the computer assisted program. Because of the director's involvement of the principals in the initial planning for the program and her on-going follow through, the program gained principal support and integration with the regular program was assured. The project director's forward-thinking leadership was accentuated by her open door policy for all Chapter I staff.

b. There were both formal and informal procedures for communication among the principal, project director and the Chapter I staff. Formal communication included scheduled conferences for discussing personnel, students, guidelines, etc. Chapter I staff and principals of Chapter I schools sent memos of any changes, meetings, or general information involving the Chapter I program. A monthly newsletter was sent to Chapter I teachers, aides, and principals. Chapter I staff, principals, and administrators also had informal "get togethers" (Christmas, end of year) that provided a relaxed atmosphere and helped build strong comraderie among those in the program. Additionally, the Chapter I director and supervisors visited the principals, teachers, and aides regularly.

c. Chapter I teachers voluntarily conducted workshops on at home instructional methods and parenting skills for parents throughout the school year. Principals disseminated information about the workshops and encouraged attendance. The Chapter I director, supervisors, and teachers spoke to school and community groups about the Chapter I program. The Chapter I Director was instrumental in the formation of a county-wide Academic Boosters Organization composed of members from all of the school/community publics. One of the Chapter I supervisors and a Chapter I teacher are currently officers in the organization.

6. APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, METHODS AND APPROACHES

a. Mercer County's project followed a pull-out design. Students received 45 minutes of daily instruction five times per week.

b. There were two unique features in our project design:

(1) Methodology. The underlying philosophy of our program was the belief that a relationship exists between development of writing and reading skills. Children were taught to read through their own writing.

(2) HOME WORKS. Our parent communication involvement program was designed to meet the specific needs of Chapter I children. These children typically need a strong school/home link. Chapter I parents, however, are typically uninvolved in their children's education. In

developing the HOME WORKS concept, the reasons for such lack of involvement were analyzed and a workable plan designed to encourage effective program/home communication and parent participation and involvement in a variety of ways. Teachers have eagerly supported the plan since they helped develop it and, therefore, HOME WORKS works!

c. Testing data was analyzed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Teacher observation and student performance in actual learning situations were carefully considered as important factors. Information and results ascertained from the above procedures were then used to plan appropriate materials, methods, and approaches. The program was adapted to fit the learning style of the student.

d. The reading labs consisted of learning stations with appropriate materials, equipment and methods used at each station. All materials, equipment and methods were selected because of their effectiveness and efficiency in teaching children to write and read. Student activities were centered around six learning stations:

Computer Station

The computers introduced "cycle" words, phonemes and the alphabet principles. Students worked at the computer in pairs using headphones for a maximum of 15 minutes daily. They took turns typing responses to computer directions and were encouraged to interact with quiet conversation. Students monitored their own progress by completing a chart on the back of their work journals.

The Work Journal Station

The work journal lessons corresponded to the computer lessons. Students worked daily at this station practicing writing the sounds and words they learned at the computer. There were two work areas, one for audio cassette player use and another for the students to complete pages that did not require audio directions. Students took completed work journals home as they finished each of the 10 instructional cycles.

The Writing/Typing Station

Teachers encouraged students' writing and helped students as they used the phonemes they learned through the computer instructional programs and the work journals. Students used the typewriter to practice typing cycle words, to type their handwritten stories, or to compose stories of their own. This station was also visited daily.

The Make Words Station

The purpose of the Make Words Station was to aid students as they realized that the phonemes/letters they were learning could be recombined to make new words.

Teachers set up this station so that students could work on a variety of manipulative activities. Students used such materials as magnetic board/letters, rubber letters, letter cards, letter stamp/stamp pad, clay, letter forms and templates and sand. Supplemental writing and reading games were also used.

The Listening Library Station

Students listened in pairs to tape recorded stories and followed the text in corresponding story books. In addition, this learning station

had a book browsing area where students looked at and read other books the Chapter I teacher, the regular classroom teacher, or the students brought to the center.

The Language Arts Development Station

Various learning activities that reinforced skills in writing, reading, and language arts development were used at this station.

The station: (1) used concrete objects; (2) focused on first hand experiences; (3) provided direct contact with a variety of stimuli; (4) established a risk-free environment; (5) encouraged experimentation, creativity and thinking; (6) incorporated tasks based on skill needs; and (7) promoted independence and self-management.

Some language development activities appropriate for this station included: (1) cutting and pasting; (2) tactile games; (3) manipulative games which reinforced phonemes and strengthened language skills; (4) puppetry and role playing; (5) music and art; (6) listening, taping, viewing; (7) language tasks (skills that correlated with the regular classroom curriculum).

e. The program was designed to move students toward developing and using independent study skills. Students monitored their own work at each learning station, thereby practicing independent study skills.

f. Children were grouped by grade levels. Within grade levels they were paired with a partner of their choice. Each child worked at his/her own level and pace. The program incorporated peer tutoring and learning.

g. The six learning stations used a variety of equipment and language arts materials to provide challenging and successful learning experiences. At each learning station the student moved at his/her own pace and, therefore, experienced continual success. The learning stations were so designed as to be self checking. Children attended three of the six stations every day plus one elective station. This variety provided both challenge and motivation.

h. Informal and formal procedures were used to determine if the materials, methods, and approaches used were effective. Emphasis was placed on informal evaluation procedures at the start of a learning activity/unit, during the instructional period, and at the conclusion of a learning activity. Information gained was used for differentiating instruction, carrying on corrective procedures, and planning for future activities. The value of informal procedures was that small pieces of work could be evaluated at once so that students noted immediate successes or began corrective strategies before problems advanced. Formal measures used were testing at the beginning and ending of some learning activities, units, and instructional periods.

7. HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR

a. Students were encouraged to participate in challenging activities such as school-wide writing contests, social studies fairs, science fairs, and other inner and inter school contests. Students were able to take what they had learned in the lab and expand upon it in other learning situations.

b. Small and large improvements in achievement and behavior were recognized as major steps in a child's development. For example, any expected school or classroom behavior was reinforced in the lab. If expected behavior was not met, the teacher dealt with the situation on an individual basis, following the appropriate procedure used in the

school. When appropriate behavior was observed, that behavior was also communicated to the child. Students were shown that high expectations were set for them in achievement. Students were encouraged to perform and helped to succeed following the philosophy that success builds upon success.

Regular classroom teachers recognized improvement in achievement and behavior of Chapter I students in the regular classroom verbally and with special rewards that all students were eligible for.

8. POSITIVE SCHOOL/CLASSROOM CLIMATE

a. Chapter I classes were orderly, disciplined, and exciting. Highly motivated teachers who felt good about themselves and their jobs, provided a low-risk environment that made learning fun and teaching rewarding. The nature of the computer assisted program was such that students were self-motivated to begin their assignment and to stay on-task. They gained independence and self-confidence at the learning stations and were anxious to share what they had learned. Displays of students' writing accomplishments were an important focal point of the lab setting.

9. MAXIMUM USE OF ACADEMIC LEARNING TIME

a. Children responded well in a low-risk structured environment where they managed their own learning activities. In order for the children to attend the required number of learning stations each day, they had to stay on task. Teachers and aides were well organized and had all learning stations "ready to go" each day. Students knew what their daily assignments were when they entered the room, so work began immediately. Children were not at any one station longer than 15 minutes; therefore, they did not become bored with the task at hand.

b. Through the HOME WORKS program students and parents were provided materials and activities that helped them reinforce the skills taught in the regular classroom and supplemented in the Chapter I lab. Word lists, flash cards, skill sheets and flexible game boards were only a few of the many tools used to encourage after-school learning. Workshops were conducted for parents on helping maintain reading skills and interest during vacation periods. Parents and children were also encouraged to read to or with each other from special HOME WORKS library books. Each teacher set a goal for the home reading involvement project and rewarded student and parent participants at the end of the year with a Reading Celebration.

At one school the Chapter I teacher established an after-school tutoring program to help integrate lab and classroom instruction.

10. CLOSELY MONITORED STUDENT PROGRESS

Informal measures were primarily relied upon once pre-testing with the Metropolitan Achievement Test was completed and the data analyzed. Each day the student's work was monitored at each learning station. From this monitoring, appropriate lessons were planned for the next day. Each week a profile sheet was completed in the following areas: phoneme cycles (what phonemes were mastered), writing (writing stage), word list (vocabulary words) and basic reading skills. This information allowed for planning additional activities for reinforcement in each area and was shared with the regular classroom teacher during regularly schedules communication. The Chapter I teacher also monitored the student's progress in the regular classroom.

Formal procedures included the end of the unit Ginn Reading Test given in the regular classroom. The regular classroom teacher shared test results with the Chapter I teacher for planning learning activities. The Metropolitan Test was given at the end of the year as a posttest. The CTBS was also given as pre and posttests.

11. REGULAR FEEDBACK AND REINFORCEMENT

a. Students received immediate feedback on their work. This feedback was both verbal and non-verbal in the form of a smile, a sticker, words of encouragement, etc. Students were also given SMILE-GRAMS and Good Apple Certificates for special achievements, improvement or work well-done.

b. The Chapter I teacher shared students' profile sheets with the regular classroom teacher on a weekly basis. Verbal feedback was given frequently to the teacher and a formal communications log allowed for shared problem solving, planning and discussion.

Parents received an individual student progress report and a newsletter containing what was being taught in the lab on a monthly basis as part of the HOME WORKS program. They also received at least one positive phone call during the year from the Chapter I teacher and were invited to participate in at least three planned parent or parent-student events during the year. One of the most effective communication tools used to share student progress was a SMILE-GRAM that really smiled. These special cards were die-cut for a Poloroid picture. Teachers were able to share special classroom moments with parents by taking the student's picture, inserting it on the front of the Smile-Gram and writing a special note about the picture inside. As one teacher noted, "We know these messages got home. Not one was found abandoned on a bus."

12. EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED AND REWARDED

a. Students were given a variety of rewards for progress and achievement. Every student in Chapter I received a special award of some kind during the year. The kind of award given depended on the child and his/her accomplishments. When awards were given to the student body at the end of the year, Chapter I awards were also presented. In the lab, students were recognized daily and periodically with praise, "I Love Chapter I Reading" stickers, "Learning is Fun in Chapter I" posters, professionally printed CHAPTER I"derful" Certificates, SMILE-GRAMS, bonus points, learning celebrations, and through a variety of other teacher-created ideas. When children received special merit they were asked to share their recognition with the rest of the school. For example, when a Chapter I student wrote an exceptionally good story or poem, he/she shared it orally. Methods of student recognition were as varied as the students receiving the recognition.

b. Realizing that teachers want to be recognized and appreciated, an on-going staff recognition program was a project goal. Teachers have credibility with the public but they often lack the visibility to reinforce that credibility. Teachers were encouraged to exhibit their own credibility and that of the Chapter I program by presenting at local, regional, state and national meetings and conferences. Such efforts were recognized with a Chapter I Speaker's Award which was a certificate suitable for framing. Outstanding teachers were recognized by being asked to be mentors for new teachers. They were also asked to present the best of their classroom ideas at inservice sessions. Their professionalism was rewarded with GOOD APPLE teacher certificates which recognized

that their efforts were "BASIC" to educational excellence. An outstanding teacher was nominated for Chapter I Teacher of the Year, a program initiated by the State Chapter I agency. Dissemination of teacher successes was shared through the monthly Chapter I staff newsletter, the county staff newsletter and local newspapers, radio and television stations.

13. EVALUATION RESULTS USED FOR PROJECT IMPROVEMENT

a. The following procedures were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project design:

(1) Surveys (over-all end-of-year evaluation, HOME WORKS, instructional effectiveness)

(2) On-Site Review by State Department of Education

(3) Internal administrative monitoring to check for compliance with state/county goals and for integration with the regular program

(4) Visits by Chapter I supervisors

b. The most recent project evaluation was completed in the spring of 1985 by parents, regular classroom teachers, Chapter I teachers/aides, principals and county supervisors. All aspects of the project design were targeted by this annual evaluation.

c. Parents were informed about the project's effectiveness primarily at school level parent meetings. This allowed for more specific interpretation of local data without making inter-school comparisons. The community was informed about the project's effectiveness through news releases, civic programs and, most of all, through the informal grapevine of information that teachers, parents and students shared through daily communication.

d. Evaluation results indicated that our emphasis needed to be placed on primary writing, reading and language arts skills. Therefore, the program was re-designed to further meet the needs of students in these areas. Parents also indicated that they needed a more frequent indication of their child's progress. As a result, monthly progress reports were established as part of HOME WORKS.

*III. PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

In 1984-85 the Mercer County Chapter I program designed and conducted an evaluation of the primary labs based on the achievement of children in writing, reading, and spelling. The scope of the evaluation involved 450 students at two experimental Chapter I schools and seven control Chapter I schools. The control schools' learning environments, teaching methodologies, and materials were similar to the experimental schools, with the exception of the use of computers.

Assessment of Student Reading

In the reading assessment of the 1984-85 evaluation, all students in grades one through three were pre-tested and post-tested using the Metropolitan Achievement Test and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. The impact of the program was measured by comparing the performance of children using the computers with the performance of similar children not using computers.

Because the data used percentiles for measurement, the percentiles were converted to NCE's so that changes at different parts of the percentile scale could be compared. The RMC Evaluation Model A was used. The NCE's for the two experimental schools and the seven control schools on pretests and posttests in reading are presented in Table 1. The performance of the children was averaged across schools and the mean NCE gain for the total program was 7.7. The mean NCE gain for the experimental schools, A and B, was 14.9, and for the control schools, C through I, 5.5.

Writing Assessment

Also as part of the evaluation, writing samples were collected, scored and analyzed for the experimental schools, the control schools, and for the combined group. There were a total of 418 samples.

The writing samples were evaluated using a single set of criteria. Penmanship, spelling, and punctuation were not a part of the criteria. The papers were judged primarily on the ideas they presented and the development and expression of those ideas. Each paper was scored twice and the two scores were added together to produce a single score from 0 to 12 for each sample.

As can be seen in Table 2, children in the experimental group received more scores of five or more than the comparison group. The overall results of the writing assessment of the three groups are also shown in Table 2. Children in the experimental group scored better than their comparison group. The mean score was 6.00 for the experimental, and 4.00 for the comparison group.

The writing samples were merged with other data, pretests and posttests, and demographic information.

The analyzed data showed a positive correlation between pretest and posttest measures and writing samples; the higher the posttest growth, the higher the writing sample score.

Spelling Assessment

A special study of spelling skills was conducted to examine the extent to which a structured phonemic spelling technique used in teaching children to write affected the way children learned correct spelling patterns. In this assessment, the children were given ten spelling words which corresponded to their grade levels. The results showed that children performed about the same in the experimental and control groups (Table 3).

Teacher Survey

In May, 1985, questionnaires were distributed to the regular classroom teachers, grades 1-3, whose students participated in the Chapter I program, and to the Chapter I teachers.

Identical questions were asked of regular classroom teachers and Chapter I teachers, adapting phrases referring to "Chapter I program" to "your reading program" so that comparative information would be obtained.

All teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of their reading/language arts program. The results showed that 96.7% of the Chapter I teachers and 82.3% of the regular classroom teachers rated their program as effective or very effective.

When teachers were asked to compare writing, reading and language arts progress of their students with those they had had in previous years, a remarkable 74.4% of Chapter I teachers felt their students were performing better, while only 30.5% of regular classroom teachers felt the same. Over 80% of both groups of teachers had received positive or very positive feedback from parents about their programs.

Included in the questionnaire were a number of questions about the use of computers in education. Teachers were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statements. There was no great difference in the responses of the two groups of teachers. Both agreed on the importance of children learning to use computers.

Parent Survey

In May, 1985, questionnaires for parents in the experimental and control schools were distributed. (This was a questionnaire independent of the annual evaluation survey.) The questionnaires returned represented 47% of the children in the experimental schools and 39% of the children in the control schools. The same questions were asked of both groups of parents. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the parents liked the experimental program "very much" as compared to 42% in the control group. Parents also thought their child liked the program to an amazingly similar degree (96% and 95%).

When asked about observed evidence of their child's reading and writing skills, more of the experimental group parents than comparison parents said their child left notes, read signs, labels, etc., wanted to do his or her own reading, wanted to read to other people, wrote words and stories, and shared their school work and wanted to read it.

Parents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the use of computers in education, and in their child's reading program. Both groups, the experimental (92.0) and control (85.0) agreed about their importance. The experimental group hoped their school would continue the use of the computer and the control group hoped their school would add the computer to their program. The majority of parents (96.0) felt that writing skills were of equal importance to reading skills.

Summary

The Chapter I program had a significant impact on the writing and reading abilities in first, second, and third graders. The experimental program and the control program were both positive in improving writing, reading and language arts skills. The experimental program, using computers, only increased this impact.

According to observations by principals, teachers and supervisors, children were delighted with their writing, whether it consisted of a couple of sentences or a multipaged story, and were generally eager to read what they had written to visitors as well as to their peers.

Principals and teachers at the experimental schools reported that "ripple effects" from the program had resulted in more writing being done by students in all grades throughout the school. They also reported an increase in attendance of children in Chapter I. Discipline problems were reported to be almost non-existent in the Chapter I program because children wanted to go to the lab.

Overall, the program was successful in both experimental and control schools. The mean NCE gain was 14.4 for the experimental schools and 7.7 for the control schools. This growth exceeded the state and national NCE average gain. Additionally, 22% of the students involved in the experimental program and 12% of those in the control program tested out. A follow-up study will be conducted on those students testing out of the program over a three-year period. Within the past three years approximately 10% of the Chapter I students tested out of the program and 3% were placed back within two years.

As a result of the evaluation, the computer-assisted program was implemented in primary reading labs in the seven control schools. The same evaluation design will be used in evaluating the two second year programs and the seven first year programs for 1985-86.

* * * * * * * * * * *

TABLE 1

Percentiles Converted to NCE's Using The RMC Evaluation Model

School	N	NCE's Pretest	NCE's Posttest	NCE Gain	T-NCE Gain
A	49	33.0	50.0	17.0	833.0
B	50	35.1	47.9	12.8	640.0
C	40	26.2	40.7	14.5	580.0
D	47	26.3	33.7	7.4	347.8
E	43	41.9	44.7	2.8	120.4
F	46	36.5	40.1	3.6	165.6
G	39	32.3	37.1	4.8	187.2
H	53	34.4	38.3	3.9	206.7
I	51	39.0	41.9	2.9	147.9
	418		17,436.4		3,228.6

Experimental Schools A and B:

Weighted Mean Posttest NCE Score:	48.9	
Weighted Mean NCE Gain:	14.9 *	N = 99

Control Schools C through I:

Weighted Mean Posttest NCE Score:	39.5
Weighted Mean NCE Gain:	5.5

Schools A-I:

Weighted Mean Posttest NCE Score	41.7
Weighted Mean NCE Gain:	7.7

*Significant at .05

TABLE 2

Writing Samples Scores
(percent of students)

Total Score	Experiment (N = 99)	Control (N = 319)
0	1.0	2.0
1	2.0	12.0
2	5.0	12.8
3	12.3	21.1
4	11.9	13.1
5	19.4	11.0
6	8.7	6.5
7	13.1	8.2
8	8.3	4.1
9	6.8	2.8
10	4.1	1.9
11	2.7	1.5
12	3.0	1.0

*Approximately 2% of the writing samples were not decipherable.

Experimental group average score: 6.0
Control group average score: 4.0

* * * * * * * * * * *

TABLE 3

Spelling: % Correct

Word	Experimental N = 99	Control (N = 319)
1. feet	80	82
2. ride	77	73
3. could	35	31
4. fun	90	87
5. good	91	91
6. they	67	65
7. tree	82	79
8. anything	32	28
9. pretty	30	27
10. together	43	38